

The coal oil lamp was used for many years as the only way of illuminating the home. The following poem is reminiscent of those early days.

COAL OIL LAMP

My grandpa says we really need one hundred
watts to see to read
"You bet!" says he, "'Lectricity's fine --just
flip a switch and light'll shine,
No match to strike, no oil to pour, no tedious
chimney-cleaning chore,
And yet, the old-style coal oil lamp was like
a friend," says Gramp.
I recollect we used to sit thru twilight's charm
till the lamp was lit,
And then the family gathered tight within the
golden pool of light.
Shadows, and the cares of day were pushed to
corners, held at bay.
By our old lamp's protective gleam, allowing
us to read or dream.
I see my mother mending there -- her loving
face, her gentle air.
My father, too, who liked to spin his limericks
there to make us grin.
I see my teacher, Miss Morrell, bent on
teaching me to spell.
Her hair was grey before its time, I fear the
fault was mostly mine.
I thought her quite a bother there, cheered her
when she moved elsewhere
But now in looking back, I see how much her
teaching did for me.
Dad smoked his pipe, lost in a book, while we
played tiddly-winks or rook
Sometimes our mama fed us cakes, courting
dreams and tummy-aches.
And when we climbed the stairs to bed, the oil
lamp lit the way ahead.
Electric lights are better, true -- without them
I would hate to do -- but 'neath
That lamp our youthful dreams were born
and blended in its beams.
Its beacon light we glimpsed afar -- our path
to home -- our guiding star."